Clause complexes

Part 1: combining clauses

a clause is…..
a configuration of:

- a process + Participant(s) (+ Circumstances)
- We headed to Geraldton

We headed to Geraldton caught up on a bit of shopping and then headed to Perth

Participant + process + Circ

configuration 1

process + Participant

configuration 2

and then process + Circ

configuration 3

a clause complex is…..
a sequence of configurations of

process + participant (+ circumstances)

We headed to Geraldton caught up on a bit of shopping and then headed to Perth

P + process + circ

configuration 1

and then process + Circ

configuration 2

a clause complex is…..
a sequence of any number of clause configurations

We came early to get a good seat

P + process + circ

configuration 1

process + Participant

configuration 2

combining clauses in a clause complex

here we are simply starting with one clause:

We headed to Geraldton

catching up on a bit of shopping and then headed to Perth

and then “tacking on” some more clauses:

(we) caught up on a bit of shopping and then (we) headed to Perth
We headed to Geraldton and caught up on a bit of shopping and then headed to Perth when we recover the participants presupposed by ellipsis in the continuing clauses, then each clause makes sense by itself.

There is a second way of combining clauses.

In the 2nd way of combining clauses, there is one independent clause, i.e. one clause that makes sense by itself.

The other clauses cannot stand alone and still make sense: they are dependent on this independent clause.

2 patterns of clause combining

1. Clauses have equal status, each making sense alone.

2. Paratactic clauses

- cannot change their sequence in the clause complex and still maintain the original meaning.

Paratactic clauses

- contain the appropriate configuration of process + participant (+circumstance) which enables each to make sense by itself
2nd pattern of clause combining

2. one clause is dominant and the others depend on it in order to make sense

This pattern of clause combining is called hypotaxis

clause combining pattern 2 = hypotaxis

in the hypotactic clause complex there is one dominant clause that contains the appropriate configuration of process + participant (+circumstance) which enables it to make sense by itself

the other clauses depend on this dominant clause complex to make sense

i.e.

in the hypotactic clause complex, clauses are unequal in status

hypotactically combined clauses

• can often change their sequence in the clause complex

• either the dominant or a dependent clause can come first

test to determine the pattern of clause combination

• see if you can change the sequence of clauses

The Blue Nile grows steadily wider and warmer as it advances at a slower pace into the desert.

Identify the verbs & insert boundaries between ranking clauses

• The Blue Nile grows steadily wider and warmer
  • as it advances at a slower pace into the desert.

hypotaxis

identify the pattern of clause combining (parataxis or hypotaxis) in the following clauses.

Proceed as follows:
1. find the verb;
2. insert the clause boundaries between the ranking clauses;
3. check whether the sequence of clauses can be changed

The planets came out of the sun, // and the sun came out of a nebula. // It has lasted some time, // and will last some time longer.

cc1 The planets came out of the sun and the sun came out of a nebula.
cc1 and the sun came out of a nebula.
cc2 The planets came out of the sun.
cc2 It has probably lasted some time, and will last some time longer.
cc2 and It will last some time longer.
When they are installed, these batteries provide back-up for the clock display and the telephone numbers in the memory.

Two monks were walking along and came to a rapidly-flowing shallow river. A young woman stood helplessly at the water’s edge, obviously unable to get across. The older monk offered to carry her across. She accepted, and he deposited her safely on the other side.

Because the grey seal’s blood contains high amounts of haemoglobin it can stay underwater for up to 16 minutes although 5 to 10 minutes is normal.

If using this sequence of clauses, you would need to identify “it” within the first clause.

Notational conventions
• hypotaxis – use the Greek alphabet, α, β, γ, etc

Notational conventions
• parataxis – use numerical notation, e.g.

We headed to Geraldton (we) caught up on a bit of shopping and then (we) headed to Perth

1 We headed to Geraldton
2 caught up on a bit of shopping
3 and then headed to Perth

linkers
• Clauses may be introduced and linked by a structural conjunction but this is not always the case so don’t rely on them

Long ago in the dim dark days of primal innocence there was no such thing as laughter on the earth. In response to the phenomena of life humans made simple noises. They screamed, yelled and howled but they did not laugh. One historic day a man was standing by a deep lake when a large coloured fish rose up towards him from the depths.
Practice: identify the clauses and the clause complexes in the following texts and indicate whether the clauses are related by parataxis or hypotaxis

**Virgo**
You will be full of optimism and a spirit of adventure this month. Tempers may flare up at home, but any aggro will be short-lived. Your main aim this month is to increase your spending money, and there will also be opportunities to improve your long-term security. Brighten up meals with colourful ingredients such as saffron, peas and carrots.

**Taurus**
You'll be in high spirits, despite one or two tricky situations. Don't get stubborn if cash discussions fail to materialize – you'll have more energy to flirt and enjoy the compliments coming your way. Eat low-fat foods such as skinless chicken and fresh juice.
Taurus
You’ll be in high spirits, despite one or two tricky situations. Don’t get stubborn if cash discussions fail to materialize — you’ll have more energy to flirt and enjoy the compliments. Eat low-fat foods such as skinless chicken and fresh juice.

Clauses in clause complex are related by hypotaxis

1. You’ll be in high spirits, despite one or two tricky situations.
2. Don’t get stubborn if cash discussions fail to materialize.
3. You’ll have more energy to flirt and enjoy the compliments.
4. Eat low-fat foods such as skinless chicken and fresh juice.

more complicated complexes
It is possible (and common) to combine parataxis and hypotaxis in a single clause complex, i.e.

within the clause complex, some clauses combine with one another in a paratactic way, while others combine via hypotaxis

parataxis & hypotaxis combined

At first we failed, but we eventually succeeded because we kept trying.

Here we have two “chunks” of information:
• we failed
  but we eventually succeeded
• we succeeded
  because we kept trying
It is also possible to find 2 lines of dependency in the same clause complex:

\[ \text{After leaving Monkey Mia } \underbrace{\text{we headed south stopping at Cervantes to view the Pinnacles}}_{\text{two "chunks" of information:}} \]

- after leaving MM we headed south stopping at Cervantes
- we stopped at Cervantes to view the Pinnacles

The gamma \((y)\) clause combines with the preceding clauses as well as with the following clause:

\[ \begin{array}{ccc}
\beta & \alpha & \gamma \\
& \text{after leaving MM} & \\
\alpha & \text{we headed south} & \\
\gamma & \text{stopping at Cervantes} & \\
\alpha & \text{we stopped at Cervantes} & \\
\beta & \text{to view the Pinnacles} & \\
\end{array} \]

The title of Aboriginal literature is problematic because literature is a European notion and privileges the very people who are oppressing Aborigines:

- The title of Aboriginal literature is problematic because literature is a European notion
- because literature is a European notion (literature) privileges the very people who are oppressing Aborigines
- and (literature) privileges the very people who are oppressing Aborigines

Practice

Aries

They say success is one percent inspiration and 99 percent hard work (as you’re discovering), but there could be some lucky breaks ahead. Friends may be unreliable until the 23rd – try to avoid no-win arguments around the 11th. Get energy from protein such as steak and fish.

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conjunctions

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3 ‘chunks’ of information

1. They say (cl.1) success is one percent inspiration and 99 percent hard work (cl.2)
2. success is one percent inspiration and 99 percent hard work (cl.2) but there could be some lucky breaks ahead (cl.4)
3. success is one percent inspiration and 99 percent hard work (cl.2) (as you’re discovering), (cl.3)

interrupting clauses

A dependent clause may interrupt the structure of a dominant clause, i.e. the dominant clause encloses the dependent clause.

His mother, who had been watching all evening, made her way over.

α  His mother << β >> made her way over
β  who had been watching all evening

Practice: Analyse the clause complex patterns in the Mary Reibey text

1. Identify the ranking clauses (enclosing any embedded clauses in square brackets)
2. Identify the clause simplexes and the clause complexes,
3. Insert any items presupposed by ellipsis;
4. Determine whether the clause complexes involve parataxis or hypotaxis or a combination of both patterns